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Personnel

SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM

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This Pope AFB Instruction (POPEAFBI) implements CORONA Tasking CFOOD-11, Engagement in Family Member Education. This instruction establishes the individual duties, responsibilities, and activity restrictions of the School Liaison Officer (SLO). It also serves as a foundation for training and funding development. Squadron commanders and the Flight Chief of the Airman and Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) are responsible for ensuring compliance with the contents of this instruction. The Flight Chief of the A&FRC will monitor the School Liaison Program and assist the squadrons as necessary. This instruction should be reviewed annually. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 37-123 (will convert to AFMAN 33-363), *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at <https://afrims.amc.af.mil/>. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF IMT 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF IMT 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command.

1. Introduction. The position of SLO was locally created and funded as a term position in response to CORONA Tasking CF00D-11, Engagement in Family Member Education, which suggested that senior wing leadership take a direct and proactive role in advocating the interests of military families on this highly important quality of life issue. The SLO position addresses this need for direct advocacy and allows for the development of positive relationships between the wing and local educational partners. The organizational alignment, training, duties, responsibilities, and funding requirements supporting the position of the SLO, however, are not currently addressed in DOD, USAF, AMC, or local directives or instructions. The USAF Core Personnel Document (CPD) is the only available document that provides some degree of scope and direction to the duties and responsibilities expected of the SLO. This document states the primary purpose of the SLO position is “to promote and improve the educational environment of military dependent children in accordance with national, DOD, Air Force, and Air Mobility Command policies and objectives.” It also provides a listing of responsibilities best summarized into three basic duties:

- 1.1. Acting as the primary advisor and representative of the installation commander on issues relating to the education of dependent children.
- 1.2. Providing direct and indirect family support and functions as an intermediary and advocate for military parents and children.
- 1.3. Promoting communication, awareness, and partnership between schools, military organizations, and parents.

2. Acting as the Primary Advisor and Representative of the Installation Commander. The installation commander is the primary advocate for all issues related to the education of military dependent children and maintains a direct and proactive relationship with our local partners in education. The SLO serves the interests of the installation commander through direct and indirect day-to-day collaboration with these partners and participation in activities that support or enhance these educational interests. The SLO develops and maintains these interests by:

- 2.1. Being knowledgeable of command structure, military family support systems, and key personnel and support systems of local school systems. Within 30 days of assuming duties, the SLO will initiate contact with key command personnel, related military support personnel and agencies, and with key officials of local school systems. The purpose of the contact is to serve as an introduction and to provide a brief overview of SLO duties and relationships.
- 2.2. Representing the installation commander at local school board meetings and related groups. The SLO relays information of interest and concern from the school board to command and from command to the school board or related groups. The SLO also acts to insure that senior wing leadership is informed and either personally attends or directly responds to critical or controversial school board or related group issues that could place the educational interests of dependent children at risk. When acting as a representative in these or related activities, the SLO acts in an advisory role only, advocating the interests of military children and families. Because the SLO represents only DOD interests, they may not participate as voting members of school boards or otherwise engage in activities that serve to manage or exercise control over school systems. The SLO should be familiar with guidance provided by Joint Ethics Regulation (DOD 5500.7R, Chapter 3, Activities with Non-Federal Entities) and applicable portions of AFI 51-902, *Political Activities by Members of the US Air Force*. The SLO should regularly attend school board meetings and related working groups or councils of school systems whose student population is 10% or more military dependent children. Other school board meetings or working groups may be monitored for items of interest or attendance through board minutes or agendas.
- 2.3. Establishing, implementing, and coordinating local administrative and operational policies and procedures. As a member of the Community Action Information Board (CAIB) and the related Integrated Delivery System (IDS) as outlined in AFI 90-501, the SLO is expected to be familiar with local activities, policies, and procedures that could potentially impact the educational interests of dependent children. The SLO is also expected to initiate and brief the IDS or CAIB on any needed changes to existing policies and to develop any new procedures or policies that could enhance the educational interests of dependent military children.
- 2.4. Coordinating the integration of installation activities related to the education of dependent children. The SLO does not act in isolation and is expected to be familiar with and coordinate with related base agencies or activities that have a potential of contributing to the educational interests of depen-

dent children. Such activities include, but are not limited, to programs or activities developed by the Family Member Programs Flight, Family Advocacy, and the A&FRC.

2.5. Providing an annual update directly to the installation commander and senior wing leaders on issues involving local school systems and the education of dependent children. Such updates should be provided after annual measures of educational success become available and prior to scheduled meetings between wing and school leadership. Such a presentation should, as a minimum, provide:

2.5.1. Educational accountability or performance measures achieved by local school systems receiving federal funding (e.g. results of state assessments, Scholastic Aptitude Tests, etc).

2.5.2. School crime, violence rates, and related safe school measures.

2.5.3. School funding issues and utilization of federal impact aid.

2.5.4. Status of local action plans developed with educational partners.

2.5.5. Significant, unusual, or recurring educational concerns identified by military parents military units, or school systems.

2.5.6. The status of SLO program implementation and development.

2.6. Providing the installation commander and senior wing leadership with the opportunity to meet with local key education leaders. The SLO will, as a minimum, either host or coordinate participation in an annual social event on base that allows local education leaders the opportunity to informally engage with key wing leadership. The SLO will insure that wing leadership is briefed and prepared to discuss any education issues prior to such a meeting being scheduled (see paragraph 2.5.). Such meetings or events may be held or scheduled to coincide or take place in a variety of venues such as luncheons, open houses, banquets, or family week activities.

2.7. Developing relationships with individuals or groups that can represent unit commander's day-to-day interests in military family issues. Rapport with the local first sergeant's group and similar organizations is essential in assuring the successful resolution of individual issues impacting the education of military dependent children. The SLO, as a minimum, will meet with the First Sergeant's group within 30 days of assuming duties. The purpose of the contact is to serve as an introduction and to provide a brief overview of SLO duties and relationships. The SLO should continue to meet with the first sergeant's group on an annual basis thereafter and provide an annual presentation on schools similar to that provided to the senior wing leadership.

3. Providing Family Support. Promoting and improving the educational environment of military dependent children is the primary purpose of the SLO. Broad and recurring issues impacting the educational environment of military dependent children are addressed at a systems-wide level of intervention by the SLO. The SLO addresses unique or individual educational concerns by acting as an advocate for the military family and, when required, as a direct intermediary between the family and the school. The SLO provides family support by:

3.1. Being identified as a key member of both base and local education groups, boards, or activities addressing military community, military family, or dependent child concerns. The SLO acts as an active and participating member of local educational groups as described in paragraph 2.2. above and military groups or organizations such as the CAIB, the IDS, and any other family advocacy or family member program that has the potential to directly or indirectly impact the educational environment of military dependent children.

3.2. Being familiar with state and local school board policies that impact the education of military dependent children. The SLO should be extremely familiar with state or local policies addressing graduation requirements, standard courses of study, student assignment and placement, attendance, discipline, student transportation, appeals and grievance processes, counseling and student intervention processes, special needs and accommodation services, extracurricular activities, standardized grade assessment and testing, alternative school placements, and partnership development. The majority of these policies should be readily available through school system websites.

3.3. Acting as a familiar partner to schools supporting large populations of military dependent children. Within 30 days of assuming duties, the SLO should visit schools whose student population is 10% or more military dependent children and discuss the role of the SLO with key personnel such as school administrators, school counselors, and school social workers. These schools should be visited or contacted on a recurring basis, generally at least once every 30 days, to monitor the educational interests of the dependent children or to identify any unique or isolated concerns of military families. Schools whose student population is less than 10% military dependent children should also be visited or monitored on a regular basis.

3.4. Addressing broad or recurring educational concerns of dependent children through local action plans developed and implemented in partnership between the base and the local school systems. The USAF is a member of the Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC). One of the purposes of this organization is to assist in the development of working partnerships between military units and local school systems. This partnership is formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and is outlined in local action plans that address needs unique to the education of dependent children. The SLO is expected to initiate these plans when required, act as a member of working groups that are developing or responsible for these plans, and act as the local wing official responsible for monitoring the implementation of these plans and the need for changes. Each local action plan will be reviewed at least annually by the SLO for needed updates or changes. In geographical areas where one or more military services are partners in these plans, the SLO will attempt to insure that there is no duplication of effort or confusion created by partnership with two or more military services. If specific SLO functions and duties are outlined in such plans, however, clear delineation of service differences shall be made.

3.5. Monitoring and addressing transition or relocation concerns of military children through direct change and monitoring of local sponsorship and in/out processing information and procedures. At least annually, the SLO will review, monitor, and update relevant sponsorship and relocation information and provide similar updates to relevant portions of the DOD Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service (SITES) webpage. The SLO will also review and provide any needed changes to any local processes or procedures developed for in or out processing and transitioning of personnel. When funded, the SLO, either individually or in conjunction with related websites, will provide an SLO-hosted/military child education website for parents. This website will provide information that is supportive of successful transitions and provide a listing of related contacts, links to school systems, local action plans, and educational organizations. Isolated parent concerns dealing with student relocation will be answered on an individual basis.

3.6. Monitoring and addressing transition and relocation concerns of dependent children with special needs or accommodations. While preparation is the key for transition for all mobile students entering a new school, it becomes critical for those students with special needs supported by exceptional children programs developed under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or those

receiving accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973. Such programs are often viewed by parents as being unwieldy and confusing. These difficulties are compounded by eligibility requirements often varying from state to state and availability of programs varying from school system to school system and even from school to school. The SLO, in coordination with the local Special Needs Identification Program (SNIP) coordinator, exceptional children directors of local schools, and other relevant offices will address these issues through both broad and individual means. Broad measures include addressing issues through the local action plans previously discussed and relevant updates to sponsorship information. Isolated parent concerns of dependent children with special needs or accommodations will be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

3.7. Monitoring and addressing deployment and readiness issues as a military dependent child educational concern. Deployment of parents can have a significant impact on the emotional well being, behavior, and education of the military child. The SLO, through actions such as coordinating with the Readiness Section of the A&FRC and members of the Family Advocacy office, providing training to Key Spouse or Phoenix Spouse members, providing awareness training for key school personnel and direct interaction with remaining spouses or guardians, will monitor and mediate the impact of deployment on the education of the dependent child.

3.8. Referring unusual or highly visible complaints by school systems to appropriate military channels for resolution. Local school systems often encounter child or family issues that are, while sometimes questionable, not readily reportable as child abuse or neglect or readily amenable to school-based intervention processes. For local schools, state regulations and policies require that school personnel report all instances of neglect or abuse through established channels. Similarly, AFI 40-301 notes that all DOD personnel are required to report incidents to Family Advocacy when they have a reasonable suspicion that maltreatment has occurred. As such, any information that an SLO receives that, in their judgment, could be suggestive of maltreatment will first be addressed through Family Advocacy. In those instances that do not rise to the level of maltreatment contemplated by the AFI but still a matter of school concern, the SLO will refer the situation to the appropriate military unit for resolution. All concerns identified by a school and provided to the SLO for such action should be in writing, recurring, well documented, and, as a minimum, be coordinated through the school principal. The situation should first be addressed by the SLO through the military member's first sergeant or unit commander. In these situations, the SLO presents information in a neutral manner and offers possible solutions. The SLO will not, however, exert influence in any decision making process. If not successfully resolved, further referral up the chain of command is recommended.

3.9. Mediating with schools on behalf of the military family. Although the SLO is expected to establish and maintain a close relationship with local educational partners, the SLO is first and foremost an advocate for the military family and child. When a parent has a complaint with a school or school personnel, the SLO will receive the complaint, investigate, and attempt to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of both the parent and the school. Some complaints may be complex, require extensive investigation and mediation, and may not be capable of being readily resolved to either party's satisfaction. The SLO should, after preliminary investigation, be prepared to accompany the parent to school meetings or appeals to address the complaint or concern raised by the parent and should be fully knowledgeable of circumstances surrounding the complaint and capable of addressing the need for intervention, applicable procedural or appeals processes, or the need for special advocacy. In such instances, the SLO acts as a mediator and presents or requests information in a neutral manner. The SLO will not act as a subject matter expert on complex issues and will not vote or exert influence in

any decision making process. The SLO should monitor parental complaints to identify any recurring issues that need to be addressed through military command channels or the local school leadership.

3.10. Providing military parents with educational or training opportunities. Parent complaints, issues raised by schools or military organizations, or surveys could suggest the need to provide training or educational opportunities to parents. While the SLO can provide training in many areas related to education and the military lifestyle, the SLO should not project themselves as subject matter experts in areas that they have no background, experience, or academic credentials. Many school systems, however, have educational experts that could present on issues such as classroom intervention for autism, attention problems, or childhood diabetes at little or no cost. Other organizations such as Specialized Training of Military Parents (STOMP) can provide parent training or advocacy on specialized needs such as the rights of exceptional children. When such needs are identified, the SLO will attempt to provide such training at little or no cost to parents. In geographical areas where one or more military services can identify the same parent training needs, the SLO will attempt to insure that there is no duplication of effort or confusion created by providing such opportunities.

4. Promoting Communication and Partnerships. The SLO promotes communication, awareness, and partnership between schools, military organizations, and parents through a process of education and information sharing. Educating parents on schools and educating school systems on the military family lifestyle often prevents problems before they occur. This is accomplished through activities such as:

4.1. Developing and participating in special activities such as exhibits, lectures, tours, and joint community school undertakings to inform military parents and promote greater understanding between local schools and military families. In geographical areas where one or more military services identify these same needs for military families, the SLO will attempt to insure that there is no duplication of effort or confusion created by providing such activities.

4.2. Providing local education partners with educational or training opportunities on issues related to the military lifestyle. The SLO or related military agencies can provide training in many areas related to military issues or lifestyle to school student services or exceptional children personnel. The SLO, however, should be wary of projecting themselves as subject matter experts in areas that they have no background, experience, or academic credentials. A well defined training need by educational partners, however, should not be ignored and should be followed up with projected scheduling, funding, etc, of presentations by military or civilian experts. When such needs are identified, the SLO will attempt to provide such training at little or no cost to educational partners. In geographical areas where one or more military services can identify similar training needs, the SLO will attempt to insure that there is no duplication of effort or confusion created by providing such opportunities.

4.3. Advising local school officials of installation programs, policies, and activities that are related to military dependent child education, e.g. a reading remediation program hosted on base.

4.4. Providing local education partners the opportunity to interact and inform the base populace of school activities, schedules, policies, and special items of interest. Although these opportunities can be scheduled and provided at venues such as open house or family day activities, other sources of information sharing such as the base newspaper and the daily bulletin can routinely be used to share important information of an educational nature.

4.5. Soliciting support of unit, squadron, and group commanders in activities involving community and school programs. The SLO is encouraged to promote and create partnerships between local

schools and military organizations, e.g. squadron “adopt-a-school” programs. In such instances, the SLO shall insure that expectations are realistic, that points of contact are identified, and that a clear and concise plan of involvement is developed and agreed upon.

4.6. Coordinating with other military school liaisons on mutual needs, issues, and program support of military dependent children.

5. Restrictions on Activities of USAF School Liaisons. The following activities are not allowed because they suggest involvement in the management or control of non-Federal entities or violate rules on political activities.

5.1. Acting as a voting member of a school board or otherwise participating in managing or controlling an educational system.

5.2. Representing a school board in dealing with third parties or educational interests. School liaisons represent USAF and DOD interests only.

5.3. Using government personnel or resources for activities that extend beyond the advisory and advocacy roles of a liaison.

5.4. Attempting to coerce school boards into supporting liaison recommendations by threatening to take official action if they fail to do so.

5.5. Using official authority or influence to affect a school board election or to solicit votes for a particular candidate or issue.

5.6. Attending political events in a liaison capacity, even without actively participating.

5.7. Identifying liaison interests with those of a political party or candidate, creating potential perceptions that the USAF supports a particular party or candidate.

5.8. Any other activity creating the appearance that the liaison supports particular parties or candidates, rather than advising elected or appointed officials on DOD or USAF interests.

6. Funding of SLO Duties and Activities. The Flight Chief, A&FRC, is responsible for funding of SLO activities. The SLO position is a new position within the DOD, however, and there is no existing baseline for services that the SLO is expected to provide. As such, it is critical that the SLO provide funding forecasts well in advance of actual need so as to allow the Flight Chief to make decisions as to the provision of specific SLO services or to make necessary adjustments in other programs. The SLO will provide the Flight Chief an annual funding forecast for the next 12 months no later than July 31 of each year. This forecast shall project:

6.1. Estimates of administrative costs associated with the position. Administrative costs include an estimate of office supplies, computers and programs, audiovisual and/or reproduction services, business cards or pamphlets, professional resources, administrative services, etc., that the SLO is expected to incur over the next year. Additional costs could include contract assistance in developing and maintaining a specialized SLO-hosted parent education website.

6.2. Estimates of travel costs. These costs include monthly local mileage costs incurred as a result of using a private vehicle to perform travel to locations required for duty performance and costs associated with any travel for associated training, workshops, or conferences, e.g. Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC) training conference, command conferences, etc.

6.3. Estimates of training costs. These costs include any funding needed for the purchase of handouts, books, presentations, etc, incurred when providing training either to parents or school staff. It may also include costs associated with paying a specialized presenter to provide training to parents or school staff, e.g. contracting with MCEC to provide training on military transitions to school staff. Additional costs could include facility rental fees, refreshment costs, handouts, etc, incurred at such venues.

6.4. Estimates of costs for special events. These are the costs associated with funding an annual or semiannual luncheon, banquet, etc, for senior wing leaders and key education partners.

6.5. Unique costs associated with the position. These costs can vary across location and duty expectations. Consideration should include the costs associated with cell phone use and costs associated with professional liability insurance. In considering the need for insurance, the SLO should be aware that acting as an advocate could expose them directly or indirectly to litigation issues. Although the government would represent the SLO in any lawsuit that occurred in the course of official duties, professional liability insurance may provide more options for the SLO.

6.6. Special program costs. These costs include any funding required for support of programs developed individually by the SLO or in conjunction with other service organizations.

TIMOTHY M. ZADALIS, Colonel, USAF
Commander

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

CORONA Tasking CF00D11, Engagement in Family Member Education

DOD 5500.7R, *Joint Ethics Regulation*

AFI 40-301, *Family Advocacy*

AFI 51-902, *Political Activities by Members of the US Air Force*

AFI 90-501, *Community Action Information Board and Integrated Delivery System*

Air Force Core Personnel Document (CPD); CPD Number 5TR5564

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFB—Air Force Base

AFI—Air Force Instruction

A&FRC—Airman and Family Readiness Center

AMC—Air Mobility Command

AW—Airlift Wing

CAIB—Community Action Information Board

CC—Commander

CPD—Core Personnel Document

DOD—Department of Defense

FAO—Family Advocacy Office

IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IDS—Integrated Delivery System

MCEC—Military Child Education Coalition

MOA—Memorandum of Agreement

MSS—Mission Support Squadron

OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility

PA—Public Affairs

SITES—Standard Installation Topic Exchange Service

SNIP—Special Needs Identification Program

SLO—School Liaison Officer

STOMP—Specialized Training of Military Parents

SVS—Services Squadron

USAF—United States Air Force

Terms

Annual—1 January through 31 December

First Sergeant—Master Sergeant through Senior Master Sergeant (E-7 through E-8) awarded the AFSC8F000 and serving in an authorized first sergeant manning position.

Impact Aid—Federal program that provides funding for a portion of the education of federally-connected students.

IDEA—National special education law.

Local Action Plan—Plans jointly developed and implemented by military installations and local schools whose function is to address broad educational concerns of military dependent children.

Section 504 of the ADA—Federal law preventing discrimination based upon disability.